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“MAKE THE MOST OF FIRST QUARTER HIRING”

With the approach of the new year, many companies will be poised to recruit and hire new employees in the first quarter. Anxious to get much-needed talent on board, managers and small business owners might be inclined to take shortcuts in their hiring process. However, taking such shortcuts may prove to be much more costly than you might think.

Hiring the right person is critical, as it has been estimated that it costs one to two times a person’s salary (or more) to replace them if they leave or if you need to let them go. This excludes the emotional frustration, disappointment or embarrassment of having made a poor employment decision. While there are no guarantees in the hiring process, you can increase the odds of hiring someone who will stay on board and make a positive contribution to your company. Here are some ways that you can enhance your selection process:

Be clear about what you need in the position. Each time a position turns over you need to evaluate what did and didn’t work with the previous incumbent. Take the time to evaluate how the position may have changed since the previous hire. Interviewing without knowing what you really need will waste everyone’s time.

Network to source candidates from beyond traditional ads or the Internet. Consider contacting former employees who left your organization under good terms. Perhaps they want to return, but are hesitant to ask; or they may know people in their professional network who might be interested and a good fit. If your company has an employee referral program, take advantage of this underground source of potential candidates.

Be aware of your biases either for or against internal candidates. Many companies offer a policy of promoting from within. While this is an admirable practice, a manager should not assume that someone with “ready-made” product or company knowledge is the most qualified person to do the job, particularly if it is a move up into management. Promotion is not an entitlement that comes with tenure. Conversely, don’t get overly enthusiastic about bringing “new blood” into the organization unnecessarily. The exact talent you need, with some training or coaching support, might be right under your nose.

Consider implementing a suitability assessment to save screening time and to provide an objective comparison of candidates. Today there are several well-developed and validated instruments available that can assist you in your selection process. Look for a technology-based tool that is relevant to the position being hired, legally compliant, and easy to use. Once you have identified an appropriate selection tool, you can save time and money while getting insightful and accurate information about your candidates’ potential for success.

Use behavioral interviewing techniques. This has been found to be the most effective way to gather targeted information during the interview process. It is based on the premise that past behavior is a reliable predictor of future behavior. Instead of asking “What would you do if.....”, try posing your question this way: “Tell me about a time when you had the situation of (example) and how you responded to or resolved that situation.” This approach takes the interview discussion from the theoretical to the experiential, and provides greater insight into the person’s working style, values and motivation.

(Adapted from the author’s column, previously published in the Syracuse Newspapers)